IMT Nuremberg Archives

H – 2481

International Court of Justice

Testimony of Albert Speer, taken at Nurnberg, Germany, 18 October 1945, 1430-1700, by Lt. Col. M. I. Gurfein, AUS, OUSCC.
Also present: Pfc/. Sonnenfeld, Interpreter and Miss Evelyn Low, Reporter.

Q. You have already been sworn I take it?

A. Yes.

Lt. Col. Gurfein to Interpreter:

Q. Do you solemnly swear that you will truthfully, completely and accurately translate from English to German the questions and from German to English the responses of the witness given here to-day to the best of your ability, so help you God.

A. I do.

Q. I wanted to ask you to-day about the Central Planning Board?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you the chairman of that office?

A. The Central Planning Board was no office as such, it was a place where decisions were made. The Central Planning Board was not led by me but the decisions were made by three men in common - by Milch, Koerner and myself. After we took over the production department from the Ministry of Economics the fourth man, Funk, was added.

Q. And did you attend all the meetings of this Central Planning Board yourself?

A. I took part in all sessions except from February until May, when I was sick.

Q. In what year?

A. 1944.

Q. And while you were away, during February to May 1944, did you receive reports of the proceedings so as to be in touch with the situation?

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A. I was kept informed of all current events by the chief of my ministry. The exact minutes of the sessions of the Central Planning Board I only read later.

Q. So that when you returned to work in May 1944 you went over all the minutes of the decisions and discussions of the Central Planning Board, I take it?

A. I don't remember this exactly but you must remember that when I returned after my sickness I came into the middle of much work and the plane attacks were going on at that time. I more or less tried to catch up with the information that I had missed with the use of certain key words in order to denote what had happened in my absence. But I will say now, frankly, that if a decision has been made, no matter what its nature, that I will tell you about it if I know about it now, even if I did not know about it at the time it was made.

Q. Who was your representative in the Central Planning Board at the time of your illness?

A. In the case of absence of one of the members of the Central Planning Board no deputy was chosen but one of the other members took over the functions of the absentee.

Q. Who was it?

A. I believe that it was Milch in this case.

Q. You mean that you were acting as the Chairman of the Central Planning Board before you became ill and that Milch took your place as Chairman?

A. There was no Chairman in the Central Planning Board as such, the three members had equal jurisdiction and powers, thus Milch was not Chairman when I was absent. In practice, however, it happened that Milch and I would usually agree upon what to do and Koerner played a subordinate part more or less.

Q. But to represent the production office of yours you must have had a man there to represent your interests during the time of your illness?

A. May I say the following here. We agreed that in the Central Planning Board Milch and I would not represent special interests. If that had been so there would have had to be other representatives besides us. For instance, there should have been one for the Navy and also somebody to represent the other main factors. We agreed that we would be impartial in representation on the Board and that we would not be there as representatives of our representative Ministries.

A 089097

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Q. To put it clearly to you, did Kehrl work for you?

A. Kehrl was in charge of the Planning Board in 1944 and this Planning Board made a draft for the sessions of the Central Planning Board.

Q. Was Kehrl your deputy?

A. No. Well Kehrl as such had a very difficult position. He had a double position. He was in charge of the Planning Board of the Production Ministry and as such was responsible for the plans of this Ministry.

Q. To whom, to you?

A. Yes, he was my subordinate.

Q. So that you were his Minister?

A. Yes. His second function was in connection with the Planning Board of the Plenipotentiary General for Armaments. In this capacity he was responsible for the total planning which was outside the proper competence of my Ministry.

Q. And who, at that time, was the Plenipotentiary?

A. I was that and I also was the Chief of Kehrl.

Q. So that in both capacities in which Kehrl worked you were his chief, is that right?

A. Yes.

Q. When did you take over your position as chief of the Armaments Office?

A. You must differentiate here between different phases. On 8 February 1942 I took over the Army Office for Armaments, that is, I was the successor of Dr. Todt. In July 1943 I took over the Armament Office of the Navy. In September 1943 I took over the Production Office of the Ministry of Economics. And in August 1944 I took over the Armament Office of the Air Force. That was after an interim stage had been created after March of 1944 by the Jaegerstab.

Q. The Jaegerstab was a branch dealing with fighter planes, was it not, in connection with aeroplane production?

A. Yes.

A 089098

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Q. And you had a co-ordinate jurisdiction with Goering or Milch at that time, in the spring of 1944?

A. Yes, the Jaegerstab tried to get out of the way of any jurisdictional disputes because it could not prevent it that Goering would not give over to me completely the manufacture of air planes, even of fighter planes alone.

Q. That means that during your career in charge of armaments you went from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and from responsibility to responsibility, always taking on more responsibilities.

A. Yes.

Q. So that each time that you took on a new jurisdiction you were cognisant already of the many and different problems that you were multiplying by taking on the new jurisdictions?

A. Partly this made things more difficult and partly this facilitated things. When I took over the Production Department of the Ministry of Economics this had the purpose of giving a total and more comprehensive jurisdiction over all these matters of production. Looked at as a whole, the overall control that was vested in me over production facilitated things rather than making them more difficult because it eliminated the brakes that were naturally put on it before, through control by the three separate branches of the Armed Services with their own separate Supreme Commanders.

Q. That means that you were able in the first place, as you increased your jurisdiction, to get a better overall view of what resources you had at your disposal. Is that correct?

A. Yes, of course I had better possibilities of co-ordination by that and thus could better meet the problems created by attacks.

Q. Your basic problems were, first, the obtaining of raw materials needed for your armaments production, is that correct?

A. This is a very complicated subject and it depends really at which phase you are looking. However, if you take a rough cross section of the whole problem then it is right to say that the raw materials created the greatest difficulties and among them certain products of the steel industry.

A 089099

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Q. Secondly, you also had the problem as a result of the bombing of where to locate factories and indeed the whole question of having adequate factory facilities?

A. This is a question that is extremely difficult to answer. It was my position that we should repair existing factories by committing everything we had at our disposal for this purpose. Others took the position that those factories should be re-located. I could not afford the change over to new localities from old localities because such a move always entails the loss of at least a half year's production. For instance, the aircraft industry after the intensive attacks on the fighter plane industry of February 1944 received the order from the Air Force to shift these factories and to cease all production in the present location,

Q. But in general the question of factory facilities, together with the question of raw materials were two of the larger problems that you had to meet?

A. Yes.

Q. There was always a third, was there not, and that was the question of obtaining a sufficient supply of labour?

A. Yes.

Q. In connection with the obtaining of a sufficient labour supply, what were the alternatives that you had before you. I am now talking of the sources of labour supply?

A. To the first degree the manpower which I should receive from the employment offices, that is through Sauckel's department. Do you want me to mention all the details?

Q. Yes.

A. So far as Sauckel is concerned, the manpower we received from him was that which was made available by the shifting of German industry and we knew these under the heading of "Fluctuation". Then German manpower that could be naturally mobilised. Then the foreign manpower that was made available by Sauckel from abroad. Then a great source was also the prisoners of war, that is for total production. However, most of these were already distributed before my time. That is so because there were almost no prisoners of war coming in after 1942. The next were the workers that came from con-centration camps.

A 08910

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Q. And this now represented all the sources of labour that you had at your disposal?

A. In the great outline, yes.

Q. Without pausing to discuss the various types of German labour that were available because that is fairly obvious, what types of foreign labour did you have available?

A. When you talk of foreign workers you cannot look at it in that way that they were directly available to me. It was handled in such a manner that the employment offices would assign German and foreign workers and then I would be informed about the total numbers of workers that were available.

Q. Obviously, the number of workers that were available or were to be supplied fluctuated, did it not?

A. Yes, they fluctuated.

Q. So that when you say that before you took office the foreign workers had already been distributed or allocated, naturally after you took office there had to be constant additions to the numbers?

A. There is a mistake. Only the prisoners of war were distributed before I entered my office, not the foreign workers. That is so because the bulk of the prisoners of war were taken in 1940 and 1941 and were then distributed.

Q. Do you mean by that that up to the time when you took office foreign workers were not being used in Germany?

A. Yes, I believe they were already there but I cannot say exactly in what numbers.

Q. When you took over your office for the first time you must have made a survey of the available manpower for the armaments industry generally, did you not?

A. When I took over my office for the first time you must remember that I was an architect and not an expert in these matters. In other words I had to get familiar with the job first and I did not find any exact information about it. To this must be added that I received intensive programs for armaments from the Army Armament office. These had already been given to Todt who was my predecessor but for the realisation of these plans, this department (the Armament Office of the Army) calculated the necessary supply of materials and manpower.

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Q. When for the first time did you make a survey of what the available manpower was in Germany to meet your tasks?

A. I never made any such investigation because it was not my task to ascertain what the total manpower was in Germany that would be available.

Q. I didn't mean for you to make the survey directly but you could have asked somebody for it, as for example, Sauckel?

A. I made a survey at that time how much manpower I could obtain from the building program, that is, if building was to be interrupted for an extended period of time. This survey showed that approximately one and a half million labourers or workers could be drawn from the building program if drastic reductions were effected. If I remember correctly this calculation was not precise but merely estimated.. It did not only include the workers who worked directly in the building industries but those who gave material assistance to the building industry.

Q. Did there come a time when you had to estimate the needs for foreign workers in Germany?

A. I never estimated it in this manner.

Q. In what manner did you estimate the needs for foreign workers for the German armaments industries?

A. It was not my task to estimate how many or how much manpower I needed from abroad but rather I had to rely upon the amount of foreign and German workers that Sauckel could make available to me. I want to say the following here. I do not wish to give the impression that I want to deny the fact that I demanded manpower and foreign manpower from Sauckel very energetically.

Q. With respect to this foreign manpower that you were requesting from Sauckel, what means did you discuss as to how these foreign workers could be brought into Germany?

A. I believe that regarding the first phase and I think that we are talking about that right now, Sauckel emphasised the fact that the foreign manpower was coming voluntarily into Germany. As far as I remember the voluntary manpower at that time was the manpower originating in the Ukraine.

Q. What period are you talking about now when you discuss this voluntary coming of workers, especially from the Ukraine?

A. I don't know how long the manpower from the Ukraine actually came voluntarily.

A 089102

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Q. When did you first find out then that some of the manpower from the Ukraine was not coming voluntarily?

A. It is rather difficult to answer this here, that is, to name a certain date to you. However, it is certain that I knew that at some particular point of time that the manpower from the Ukraine did not come voluntarily.

Q. And does that apply also to the manpower from other occupied countries, that is, did there come a time when you knew that they were not coming voluntarily?

A. Yes.

Q. When, in general, would you say that time was, without placing a particular month of the year?

A. As far as the Ukraine situation goes I believe that they did not come voluntarily any more after a few months because immense mistakes were made in their treatment by us. I should say offhand that this time was either in July, August or September of 1942.

Q. And as to the other occupied countries, for example Poland, when did you find out that foreign workers were being brought in against their will?

A. I believe that I received almost no manpower from Poland. That was because Polish manpower usually was allocated into agriculture, that was an old tradition or old practice with us.

Q. Just by the way, you used Polish workers in the mines didn't you?

A. Yes but they lived there. That was in the Polish part of Upper Silesia. In the Ruhr coal mines Russian prisoners of war were used in the main. And by the way I only took over this aspect of production in September 1943.

Q. With respect to the Czechs, when did you first find out that Czech workers were being sent into Germany against their will?

A. As far as the Czech workers are concerned, I believe that only on one occasion was a recruitment program carried out there and that was done by the Air Force. If I remember correctly 80,000 Czech workers were recruited to be taught certain techniques in Germany and then returned to their homes. The Governor Frank of the Protectorate had a hard fight against this taking away of manpower from his area and in exchange he always offered an increase of production in his area.

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Q. With respect to Dutch workers for example, when did you first find out that Dutch workers that were not volunteers were being brought into the Reich for work?

A. With the best intentions I cannot make a differentiation here between the different nations because, as such, I was not interested in the distribution of manpower that came from the west.

Q. But many workers actually did come from the west did they not, to Germany?

A. Yes.

Q. That means then that the great majority of the workers that came from the western countries, the western occupied countries, came against their will to Germany?

A. Yes.

Q. Who made the decision to take these foreign workers against their will into Germany?

A. It was the task of Sauckel to make decisions like that.

Q. But surely Sauckel by himself could not make a decision of as far-reaching international importance as that?

A. Sauckel as Gauleiter stood in immediate connection with Bormann and Bormann, if asked by Sauckel, would report on this to Hitler. It was necessary to give the competent military commanders the decisions that had been reached in this matter and I believe that nobody outside of Goering or Hitler would have been able to so instruct the military commanders and as far as I remember the Foreign Minister of the Reich had to be consulted several times in order to come to some agreement with the French Government.

Q. That is Herr von Ribbentrop you mean?

A. Yes.

Q. Personally?

A. I cannot say this exactly because I was not present but I do believe that Bormann instructed Ribbentrop personally about the wishes of the Fuhrer.

Q., At any rate, it is clear is it not, that you understood at the time when you were requesting labour through Sauckel that a good part of this labour was coming from foreign workers who were being involuntarily brought to the Reich?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you personally present at any discussions concerning the advisability or the necessity of obtaining foreign workers by coercive means?

A. Sauckel usually effected his discussions with the Fuhrer alone. I was present at one discussion which took place in January 1944 and I mentioned it to you the other day. That is one where I was present.

Q. Would you mind repeating the substance of that very briefly?

A. This already belongs to a period where I had differences with Sauckel about the exploitation of the occupied areas of the west and I think it would be going too far if I was to go into all the details all over - it appears in a previous interrogation. At that time I tried to increase the productive output of the western countries and thus exploit their industrial potential and I was very much against the coercive measures used by Sauckel. Thus it was difficult for me not only to find manpower there but they also fled the factories where they had worked.

Q. That relates to 1944. Let us go back to as early as 1942. Did you ever have any conferences with the Fuhrer concerning the necessity or the desirability of using means of coercion?

A. I have handed over all the minutes of the conferences which I had with the Fuhrer? In itself the commitment of labour may be a very important thing. However, it was only a small part of my total activity. If there is any reference made in those minutes then I might be able to tell you more about it when I read it again.

Q. Without looking at the Minutes to start with, were you in general in agreement with the policy of forcing civilian labour from the occupied territories to come to the Reich against their will?

A. Yes, I concurred in that because it was my opinion that this was done in an orderly and legal manner. I believe that I didn't have to go into all the details but I think that you may be well familiar with all the reasons why one could concur in such a policy. The last analysis of this ends in the legality of the French Government.

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Q. How about the workers from the Ukraine, will you please state what reasons you had for concurring with that policy?

A. No, there are no reasons.

Q. How about with the Dutch?

A. There are no reasons there either. In the last analysis the individual responsibility for the manpower being deported out of the country was the competent deputy of Adolf Hitler in that country. I believe that I could not have refused to use the manpower that came from abroad any more than a factory manager can have done that.

Q. Leaving out the question of your own responsibility for the moment, is it your view then that the deputy of the Fuhrer in Holland for example was guilty of a crime in forcing these Dutch people to come into the Reich against their will?

A. I cannot answer that question.

Q. Before, you started to say that there was no legal reason, as I understood it, why it was possible to bring in foreign workers against their will and you stated that in the case of France it depended upon the recognition of an independent French Government but that in the case of Dutch workers for example there was no reason that you could give?

A. Yes.

Q. I ask you then, when you state that there were no grounds to offer, I understood you to mean that there were no grounds legally which could be offered to support or defend the bringing in of Dutch workers against their will into Germany?

A. No, I cannot defend that and it was not my task either to investigate these things or to defend them.

Q. But I ask you now as you sit here whether there is any argument or ground that you can advance to justify legally the deportation into Germany of these Dutch workers against their will?

A. You mean on legal grounds?

Q. Or a moral one?

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A. I had a correspondence with Sauckel in the Spring of 1944 and in a letter he accused me that I was calling the foreign workers in Germany deported workers. He stated that those foreign workers had been legally taken to Germany and there could be no talk of deportation.

Q. But when you wrote to Sauckel in the spring of 1944 you believed, did you not, as you state, that these workers had in fact been deported from Holland?

A. Yes, it was my opinion that they had been forced to come to Germany.

Q. And that opinion you held for a considerable period of time before you wrote the letter to Sauckel?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you ever object to anybody about this policy of bringing labour from the occupied countries into Germany against their will?

A. Yes, I did that at the moment when the transport of foreign workers did great damage to me as far as the production in the occupied areas is concerned.

Q. But I mean on moral or legal grounds, did you ever object?

A. I cannot remember that but I will think about it.

Q. So that during the period when you were asking for labour it seems clear, does it not, that you knew that you were obtaining foreign labour as well as domestic labour in response to your requests and that a large part of the foreign labour was forced labour?

A. Yes.

Q. So that, simply by way of illustration, suppose that on January 1, 1944, you required 50,000 workers for a given purpose would you put in a requisition for 50,000 workers, knowing that in that 50,000 there would be forced foreign workers?

A. Yes.

Q. One of the other categories that you mentioned at the beginning was labour from the concentration camps. Do you recall that?

A. Yes.

H2481 - 0014

Q. This labour that was in the concentration camps, did you requisition that as you did other labour?

A. As far as I know, the allocation of manpower from concentration camps was directly negotiated between the Commandants of the concentration camps and the factory managers without consultation of my department for the commitment of labour but not of Sauckels. Sauckel knows exactly what I thought about it but I cannot say with certainty just how this was

Q. So that I take it that in the case of the concentration camp labour your office was in even more direct relation to it that in the case of the foreign workers because Sauckel did not have to intervene in the matter?

A. I believe yes but I cannot say exactly but this can be ascertained. At any rate Sauckel was excluded from this matter. I cannot say whether this would be applicable in every case, Sauckel could tell you, I don't know whether the employment office was excluded in every such case because they had to ascertain the needs.

Q. But, in general, the use of concentration camp labour was known to you and approved by you as a source of labour?

A. Yes.

Q. And you knew also, I take it, that among the inmates of the concentration camps there were both Germans and foreigners?

A. I didn't think about it at that time.

Q. As a matter of fact you visited the Austrian concentration camp personally did you not?

A. I didn't - well I was in Mauthaussen once but at that time I was not told just to what categories the inmates of the concentration camps belonged.

Q. But in general everybody knew, did they not, that foreigners who were taken away by the Gestapo, or arrested by the Gestapo, as well as Germans, found their way into the concentration camps?

A. Of course, yes. I didn't mean to imply anything like that.

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Q. Were there any other special categories of foreign workers that were separately treated as, for example, Jews?

A. In 1942 for instance we used Jews in German factories.

Q. Foreign Jews or German Jews?

A. I believe German Jews.

Q. Put your mind on foreign Jews. Did you use those for forced labour in Germany?

A. As far as foreign Jews are concerned, Hungarian Jews were used in the building program.

Q. And when was that - in 1944?

A. Yes that was in 1944.

Q. Who made the decision to use the Hungarian Jews for this building work?

A. There is a history to that. Do you want me to tell you about it.

Q. Yes please, briefly.

A. Hitler had the intention to build great underground aeroplane factories in the Fall of 1943. He gave an order to that effect However, I did not concur in that and therefore I did not execute the order in all its strictness. In March of 1944 the director of the Central Organisation Todt office submitted plans for these to Hitler. This was during the period of my illness. In this connection he stated that the building should be finished within six months. Hitler gave Dosch a direct order to build these six factories outside the normal competence of my Ministry. There were several big differences in this question between Goering and myself and also between Hitler and myself. As a result of these differences I received a written order from Hitler that Dosch was to build these six factories. The order should still be there. As far as I know the Hungarian Jews were made available for the building of these six factories by direct negotiations ~~xxxx~~ that Dosch carried out.

Q. Carried out with whom?

A. I don't know exactly and I cannot say this because all this took place during the period of my illness but I believe there is a note ~~xxxxx~~ about that with the official papers that are in your possession.

H2481 - 0015

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Q. When did you recover from your illness?

A. In the middle of May 1944.

Q. Did you transact any business during April 1944 before you were completely recovered?

A. Of course I always had to do a few things in spite of my illness.

Q. Where were you actually while you were ill?

A. At first I was in Hohenlychen, that was because I had an infection of the knee, from there I went to Klessheim, near Saltzburg and from there to Merano.

Q. And where were you in April 1944?

A. In Merano.

Q. Did you transact business from Merano?

A. Yes, I did this in a restricted measure. I was there to recover but every three or four days something came up.

Q. And did your people bring you papers to sign also?

A. Yes, I believe, yes.

Q. I want to ask you again, did you not personally order the arrangements to be made for the deportation of 100,000 Hungarian Jews for the project you have described?

A. No, I did not order that personally.

Q. I want to show you a letter of 17 April 1944 (1584 PS Document V) a photostat, and ask you to read it through and tell me whether you wrote that letter or dictated it?

A. As is apparent from the two letters TAE and the No.474-44 it is evident that this originated in the Technical Department. The minutes of the discussions with the Fuhrer were always published under my name in order to give them the greatest possible authority. This is the result of such a discussion which took place during my illness. I did not write this. Sauer was the author of this document.

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Q. And before this document was written you already knew and participated in the discussions as you have previously told us, about the obtaining of 100,000 Hungarian Jews for this Dosch project?

A. I believe that this is the same but it is out of the question that I participated in it because I was sick at the time.

Q. But you did tell us the history of the thing a little while ago concerning the requirements for the Dosch project and as I understood it you said that you knew that the Hungarian Jews were to be brought into Germany for purposes of this project. Is this correct?

A. I only didn't know the date any more. I didn't know whether this was before or after. At any rate it was not before the discussion that took place with Hitler at that time.

Q. What was not before, the letter or the knowledge?

A. What I mean to say is that I didn't know about the coming of these 100,000 Hungarian Jews to Germany before this letter was written or before the discussion took place with Hitler.

Q. But when you recovered and before the Hungarian Jews actually came, you knew about it, is that what you mean?

A. When I recovered of course I knew that these Hungarian Jews were coming to Germany. I didn't know at this time they actually were in Germany and had been obtained for this program.

Q. Did you object in any way to the use or to the transport of these Hungarian Jews by force?

A. No.

Q. I just wanted to ask you with respect to the coal miners, did you ever issue instructions to the effect that foreign workers to be used as odal miners should not be given the same medical examination as German miners?

A. No. As far as I know the right society for coal and coal products ~~Reichsgruppe~~ determined the foreign workers in the camps and determined whether they were to be used as miners.

Q. Do you remember being at a meeting of the Central Planning Board on the 22 July 1942?

H2481 - 0018

A. I cannot say at just like that but it must be so.

Q. I want to show you a copy of the minutes of the meeting and ask you whether you recognise that you were present at the meeting?

A. Do you want me to read all of it

Q. Yes?

A. I believe that the verbatim report of this should still be in existence and from that it could be determined who made the suggestion that the "Knappschaft doctors should be informed that prisoners of war should be judged differently from German miners". I could not give directives of any kind to the Knappschaft doctors, not even in my capacity as being a member of the Central Planning Board.

Q. Well Germany was an authoritarian state at the time. Somebody could give orders to the coal miners doctors as to the physical standard they should apply, could they not?

A. Yes but I didn't know who that was and in my opinion it was the Ministry of Labour who was competent in any social questions. Or the trade supervisers which were in the Labour Ministry.

Q. At any rate you do not deny that you were present at the meeting at which the suggestion was made and you did not take exception to it?

A. I cannot remember it any more but I certainly did not object to it.

Q. I asked you towards the beginning whether you ever had any conversations with Hitler concerning the policy decision of employing compulsion with respect to the obtaining of foreign labour. Do you remember that?

A. Yes I remember it and I repeat my answer that I could find out from the minutes whether such discussions took place.

Q. I will show you a protocol of the conferences with the Fuhrer on the 10th, 11th and 12th August 1942, written up by you and call your attention particularly to what is recorded as Page 16 and ask you to read it and see if it refreshes your recollection.

H2481 - 0019

A. It is certain that the conference took place, otherwise it would not have been contained here.

Q. Does that, after looking at it and after thinking about it, refresh your recollection a little as to the circumstances of the meeting and the discussion?

A. May I have the night to think about it and I am sure that I will remember something about it then. You must take into account that during a conversation with the Fuhrer thirty or forty different points were brought up and that such discussions took place almost every three weeks. You must furthermore take into account the fact that all these documents that you show me now, you received from me, so then you can believe me that I am not trying to hide anything.

Q. The question I want to ask you is not so much whether you remember this particular conference as whether it does not remind you that you did discuss at some time or other with Hitler the question of compulsion of foreign labour?

A. That was certainly the case and it is apparent from this note. To this I must add that Hitler would rather see foreign workers in Germany than in production in the foreign countries. I further wish to add that if you go through the minutes of the conferences with Hitler you will find that the commitment of labour was frequently discussed in the beginning, that is in August and September 1942 and that from there on there are no further points on this subject contained therein. This is due to the fact that at that time the differences between me and Sauckel already existed in that Sauckel discussed his problems either directly with Hitler or Bormann.

Q. But is it clear to you, Mr. Speer, that in 1942 when the decisions were being taken concerning the use of forced foreign labour that you participated in the discussions yourself?

A. Yes.

Q. So that I take it that the execution of the program of bringing foreign workers into Germany by compulsion under Sauckel was based on earlier decisions that had been taken with your agreement?

A. Yes, but I must point out that only a very small part of the manpower that Sauckel brought into Germany was made available to me, a far larger part of it was allocated to other departments that demanded them.

H2481-0020

Q. A certain number of these foreign workers were used specifically for the armament industries under your control, were they not?

A. I don't quite understand the question that you are putting to me. It goes without saying that a certain amount of the workers were employed by me but it was no specific part of the workers.

Q. So that some of the workers at least who were brought in to Germany against their will from the occupied countries were used for the ~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ manufacture of munitions of war and weapons?

A. Not just some of them, a great part of them.

Q. Did you ever, in connection with the obtaining of foreign civilian labour from the occupied countries, participate in any discussions about making them prisoners of war and then taking them into Germany?

A. I remember that something similar to that was discussed. I remember that this question came up in connection with Russia and when we retired from there. The soldiers said that the male population was used to fill the Russian ranks and they were being armed and it was discussed whether it would not be better to make them prisoners of war and take them to Germany instead of having them fight against us.

Q. In other words, you say that you were present at a discussion where it was proposed that ordinary civilians who were not bearing arms or in uniform were to be arrested and made prisoners of war as if they had been combatants?

A. I cannot say it in just this manner but I suppose you have a document which makes this apparent.

Q. No, but I would like you to rely on your own recollection too, if you were present as you said you were. But please tell us from your own memory.

A. Look here, you really must not expect too much from my memory. I had a great number of worries but rest assured I would say so if I remembered that such a discussion had taken place. As far as I know it was not only a question of committing manpower but also a military question. With the best intentions I could not swear to it.

Q. I want to show you then a minute of a conference with the Fuhrer which you signed, dated 8 July 1943 with a No.17 on it and ask you please to read it through.

A. This is quite so as Hitler said that in these cases very determined action had to be taken.

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Q. And you did not object to it, I take it?

A. No, I did not object.

Q. I would like to call your attention, if I may, to the fact that the reason given is that Russian prisoners of war are needed in the amount of approximately 150,000 to 200,000 for the mines that if these prisoners could not be released by the Army then action would be taken against the civilian population?

A. That is what the document says, yes.

Q. So that the basis of the decision, as explained in the document, was not to protect the military interests but for the purpose of obtaining needed labour. Is not that correct?

A. I don't know this exactly but it is a fact that in July 1943 I was not responsible for coal; as the document sets forth Sauckel and Pleiger were responsible to execute these orders and that they were to report to Hitler. As the document furthermore states, I merely requested a copy of this report for myself.

Q. So that, as I understand it, these Russian civilians that were to be brought in were not to be used only for the coal mines but also for the armament industry as well?

A. No, I believe that coal in the first degree. It should also be investigated whether this was ever carried out. You cannot say that every order that was given by Hitler was always carried out. And I believe that at this time the Supreme Commanders of the Army Groups had different worries than just to carry out such measures.

Q. What interests me was that you said that you wanted a copy to be sent to you and you also state that you did not have coal mines in your jurisdiction but in fact you did have the armament industry in your jurisdiction and I ask you whether those workers that were not suitable for coal mines were not to be put under your supervision for armament work?

A. There are two reasons why I was interested in a copy of this. The reason you gave is undoubtedly correct. It is evident that only a part, say about half those workers, were suitable to work in coal mines. The other half was available for other purposes. In the Central Planning Board Pleiger was responsible for the handling of the coal production and then as a member of the Central Planning Board I was interested whether the manpower that was promised by Sauckel would be

actually available. This was because coal production was the base of the total production.

Q. Let me ask you another thing with respect to this memorandum of the 8 July meeting 1943, it is stated in that - and I will read it in German and then translate it:

"The Fuhrer ordered at the same time that these prisoners of war who are not fit for the mines should immediately be placed in the Iron industry in the manufacturing and Supply industry and in the armament industry".

Was that the general policy with respect to the use of prisoners of war?

A. No. The fact was that the remainder of the workers that could not be used in coal mining were free for other uses. It was my purpose in this conference to secure at the same time those workers for other purposes that could not be used in the coal mines. It was the general line that Sauckel was responsible for the distribution and allocation of manpower. I want to add here that it is not certain that Sauckel actually carried out such a plan.

Q. What I meant to ask you generally is, was it the policy to employ prisoners of war in the armaments factories?

A. Not only the armament industry came under my jurisdiction but also the subsidiary industry of the Iron Products industries. And my total competence was not defined as that of a Minister for Production, as is done in other countries, but as a Minister for Armaments.

Q. But regardless of your competence or jurisdiction, was it a general practice to employ prisoners of war in the making of munitions?

A. I believe that prisoners of war were employed in armament factories but I did not pay any attention to this fact.

Q. Did they include only Russian prisoners of war or did that also include British, American, French, Polish, Dutch, Belgian, Norwegian prisoners of war?

A. That includes all prisoners of war. It was not my opinion that I had any obligation to pay attention to this, and I don't know whether the conditions which I found in 1942 as far as it concerns prisoners of war where ever changed during my time.

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Q. Let me understand; when you wanted labour from prisoners of war did you requisition prisoners of war separately or did you ask for a total number of workers?

A. Only Schmelter can answer that exactly. As far as the commitment of prisoner of war labour goes it was effected through employment officers of the Stalags. I tried several times to increase the total number of prisoners of war that were occupied in the production at the expense of the other demand factors.

Q. Will you explain that a little more?

A. In the last phase of production, that is in the year 1944 when everything collapsed, I had 40% of all prisoners of war employed in the production. I wanted to have this percentage increased.

Q. And when you say employed in the production you mean in these subsidiary industries that you have discussed and also in the production of weapons and munitions, is that right?

A. Yes. That is the total extent of my task.

Q. Did you ever discuss any means of raising the productive capacity of prisoners of war?

A. Yes. As a matter of fact we sent circulars to the factory managers in order to tell them how the prisoners of war should be treated so that their productive capacity could be raised. One circular was sent out in either April or May 1944. I know that because I just read it. I believe that it is exemplary so far as the recommendations go for the prisoners of war.

Q. And did that include also the treatment of prisoners of war who were working in weapons and munitions factories?

A. This was a general circular that was sent to all the managers of the factories. You must remember the fact here that some of the armament industry also produces other goods, take Krupp for instance, in addition to producing armaments they produce locomotives and other products.

Q. Did you ever discuss, by the way, the requirements of Krupp for foreign labour?

A. It is certain that it was reported to me what lack Krupp had in foreign workers.

Q. Did you ever discuss it with any of the members of the Krupp firm?

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A. I cannot say that exactly but during the time of my activities I visited the Krupp factory more than once and it is certain that this was discussed, that is, the lack of manpower.

Q. Did you ever discuss the labour problem with Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Holbach?

A. I think that this is out of the question because Krupp was very old and I only saw him once during the years of my activity. If any such question came up it was discussed with the responsible directors of the factory.

Q. Did these directors ask you for foreign labour?

A. It is probable that they reported to me the total needs in manpower. It is not probable that they informed me about their requirements for foreign labour unless they had the opinion that at that time German manpower was not available.

Q. Coming back to the full use of the capacities of prisoners of war, was it ever suggested in any conference that you know about that the productive powers of prisoners of war could be increased by giving jurisdiction over them to the SS?

A. No, I cannot remember that.

Q. Did you ever see the minutes of such a meeting? I will show you a memorandum of a conference of Sauer with the Fuhrer and others, dated 6 March 1944 in Berlin?

A. I cannot say whether this was the case. This conference took place in March of 1944, that is, during the period of my illness. If there is a notation on the document - Geseben Spper, then I saw the document after my illness.

Q. In connection with your trip to Austria, was it the purpose of your trip to establish concentration camps close to the side of factories so that the concentration camp inmates could be readily used as labour in the new factories?

A. When was that trip to Austria?

Q. Was that in 1941?

A. In 1941? I was not a Minister then.

Q. What were you then?

A. I was an architect in 1941. That was not 1941 it must be later.

Q. You had discussions with -

A. I cannot remember the name at the moment.

Q. Do you know Eigruber?

A. Yes. It must have been about 1943 or 1944 but I don't know exactly. I will think about it. The fact that we were anxious to use workers from concentration camps in factories and to establish small concentration camps near the factories in order to use the manpower that was available there was a general fact. But it did not only come up in connection with this trip.

(Whereupon at 1700, 18 October 1945, the hearing was adjourned)

APPROVED:

INTERROGATOR: [signature]

INTERPRETER: [signature]

REPORTER: [signature]

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3720-PS

OFFICE OF U.S. CHIEF OF COUNSEL FOR WAR CRIMES

EVIDENCE DIVISION

Date : 19 July 1948

I certify that Document Number 3720-PS was introduced into evidence as Exhibit Number USA-220 in the Trial by the International Tribunal of Hermann GOERING, et al, which commenced on 20 November 1945, and that the attached photostat is a true and correct copy of the original.

Fred Niebergall

Fred NIEBERGALL
Chief, Document
Control Branch.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the annexed document 3720-PS No. USA-220 is a photostat of an original document submitted in evidence by the United States Prosecution under this number. The original document has been withdrawn in accordance with Rule 10 of the International Military Tribunal, and to the best of my knowledge and belief is to be held at the National Archives, Washington D.C. .

Nuremberg, 25 June 1948

Paul Joosten

PAUL A. JOOSTEN

General Secretary
International Military
Tribunal

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